

**DRAFT MINUTES
John Day Snake
Resource Advisory Council
Walla Walla, WA
June 25, Field Trip to School Fire, Umatilla NF
June 26, 2007- Business Meeting**

Field Trip RAC Attendees: Adriane Borgia's, Terry Drever-Gee, Dan Forsea, Art Waugh, William Lang, Shirley Muse, Dave Riley, Phil Shephard, Berta Youtie, Mike Hayward, Robert Parker, Frank Bird, J. David Moryc.

Agency Field Trip Attendees, Presenters & Guests: Kevin Martin, Monte Fujishin, Joani Bosworth, Delanne Ferguson, Caty Clifton, Craig Busskohl from Umatilla NF; Penny Morgan & Leigh Lentile (University of Idaho); Sarah Lewis (Rocky Mtn Research Station), Spencer Hovecamp, Gary Miller (USFW), Dave Henderson, Virginia Gibbons, Jim(from Last Resort).

Business Meeting RAC Attendees: Adriane Borgias, Terry Drever-Gee, Dan Forsea, Art Waugh, William Lang, Shirley Muse, Dave Riley, Phil Shephard, Berta Youtie, Mike Hayward, Robert Parker, Frank Bird, J. David Moryc.

RAC members not present: John Tanaka.

Quorum: Yes

RAC Federal Official Attendees: Dave Henderson (Vale BLM), Kevin Martin (Umatilla NF), Steve Ellis (Wallowa-Whitman NF), Debbie Henderson-Norton (Prineville BLM, Mike Lawrence for Jeff Walter (Ochoco NF).

Federal officials not present or represented: Stan Benes (Malheur NF).

Presenters: Steve Ellis/Dan Ermovick, Tina Welch, Chris Knauf

Visitors: Jim Hancock, Dan Ermovick

Acting Designated Federal Official: Dave Henderson

RAC Chair: Berta Youtie (vice-chair)

Notetaker: Pam Robbins

Facilitator: Virginia Gibbons

Meeting Called to Order/Introductions-Berta Youtie, Chairman

Travel voucher/Action Item Recap/April minutes /Agenda overview-Virginia Gibbons

Need to sign travel authorizations & vouchers & return to Virginia or mail to:

Roger Bost (541) 416-6787

c/o Prineville District BLM

3050 NE 3rd Street

Prineville, OR 97754

April Meeting Action Item Results

Steve Ellis meeting with Nez Perce to seek Tribal Rep – meeting rescheduled for two weeks out. Adriane needs to get onto the mailing list for the Eastern Washington RAC; will contact Robert Towne

Salmon recovery website information from Spencer Hovecamp went out to RAC members; timing for RAC input seems appropriate for the September meeting.

Blue Mountain Forest Plan revision schedule has been altered. Dave Schmidt would still like the RAC perspective on the major issues.

Umatilla noxious weeds draft EIS is out for public input right now. RAC Members received a copy. Subgroup will schedule a conference call so that RAC comments can be compiled prior to the comment period close.

Wallowa-Whitman is on the brink of issuing a draft, but funding is not currently available.

Blue Mountain Forest still wants RAC comments. This should go on the September meeting agenda.

******ACTION ITEMS: (STATE WHAT, WHO, & WHEN)***

- ***RAC should send letter to emphasize the value of native seeding on the School Fire reclamation (Berta)***
- ***Kevin will advise the RAC if he needs a letter of support for long-term monitoring; if so, Berta will draft a letter for RAC approval.***

JD Basin RMP Update- Tina Welch

Distributed a copy of the matrix for the RMP. The John Day Basin is about 1/12 of the area of the state. Boundary is the sub-watershed, even though BLM lands are just discrete blocks of the area. District will only make decisions about things that are new or things that have changed. New science, new uses, and newly acquired lands (NOALE) will be the topics to consider. Does RAC think the scope is adequate? Are the elements in the alternatives appropriate? It's very rough so that the RAC can help to shape it early. Cooperators meeting was yesterday, and today's version includes those modifications. This is pre-decisional information, not to be shared.

Start with full recap with clarifying questions. Combining plans for three areas into a single one, providing landscape scale direction. Action alternatives follow:

The vegetation component acknowledges that plants are at varying stages of growth, so the range of seral stages must be included. Future management focus is forest health, ecosystem functionality.

Fire alternative identifies appropriate management response based on the location and situation of the fire.

Wildlife standards based on gathering data to update our practices.

Visual resources being addressed for the new lands acquired in the North Fork area.

Wild and Scenic River assessment shows North Fork is eligible; plan considers whether and where it may be suitable.

Areas of Critical Environmental Concern includes area for curlew, trail ruts, and Washington ground squirrel. Manage Lower John Day for visual qualities. Paleo resources in Grant County to receive special management.

There are no RNAs, but special plant population in Sutton Mountain area will have some protection.

Wilderness Study Areas will continue to be managed by current standard.

Recreation management specific about the recreational experience sought based at a specific place.

Grazing to continue with current management system. Developing a matrix for situations where actions seem to conflict. Reviewing some allotments that may need revision.

Newly acquired lands being assessed for grazing, as mandated by the exchange language. Cost projections will be included in the decision matrix.

Travel management decisions will be about what roads BLM will maintain.

Off-Highway Vehicle travel mostly open. Alternative would limit to designated routes, and close some places. This could be highly controversial.

Special Designation material handed out.

*****ACTION ITEM: (STATE WHAT, WHO, & WHEN)**

- *Virginia will get a copy of the 10 specific PFC objectives from Teal, and send to RAC members.*
- *Teal to send RAC members more info on Spanish Gulch attributes, decision considerations.*
- *Tina will provide expanded table on draft alt's to RAC electronically, through Virginia, by July 2.*
- *All RAC members to compile the questions prompted by today's discussion, and send to Berta by July 6. She'll compile them and forward to Tina by July 9.*
- *Subgroup meeting can meet in Prineville on July 10 in the afternoon. Tina confirm that Teal/team can accommodate this.*
- *RAC wants more details on several alternatives.*
- *RAC wants language included in the plan that shows the things pulled forward from the current John Day plan.*

Travel Management Plan, Wallowa Whitman NF-Steve Ellis

Completed two rounds of public meetings so far. Forest Steering Committee overseeing this process. Update shows huge increase in OHV use on public lands, resulting in conflicting activity. Planning based on four major threats, included "unmanaged outdoor recreation." Needed a strategy for dealing with use, including habitat damage, wildlife disturbance, invasive species spread, and user conflicts. Rule provides direction for all Forests and Grasslands by end of 2009. Seven-fold increase in use, and Oregon use in NE Oregon is up more than 38%. In 2006, completed data validation, and began public involvement and EA in 2007. The draft EIS, public involvement and final decision is due in 2008, so they can make the designations and prepare the map by the end of 2009.

Proposed Action will be giving a description of designated system available for motorized vehicle use. Comment period closes August 17. Portions of the system of roads, trails & areas will be designated as open, specifying types and seasons of use.

The plan doesn't specifically address permittees for rights-of-way, mining, inholders and others. Expect little change for these folks.

Proposed action will not change existing uses on Maintenance Level (ML) 2-5 roads. Prohibits use on ML-1 roads; they're classified as "closed" in the transportation system database. They've been closed since 1989, but public awareness has not kept up. There are berms, gates, or revegetation on many of these roads, but some have no physical closure or other indication. Forest is asking the public to comment on which ML-1 roads should be changed to "open" with specific reasons or rationale for the recommendation.

Presently the road inventory shows only 46 of 53 watersheds have more than 2 miles of road, and overall there is some sort of road every 400 feet on the Forest. Issues include elk habitat, fisheries, cultural and others. Many of them are unsigned, and prompt varied resource concerns.

The public has no way to tell the ML of a road, or if a particular road is open or closed. This process should address the public's awareness and participation in the process.

Partners are considering helping with signage. Proposed action will continue motorized use on all 120 miles of designed trails, and prohibit motorized use on hiking trails.

Consistent within the region:

- *Dispersed camping may be allowed up to 300 ft. off designated route*
- *No provision for big game retrieval off designated routes*
- *Will not analyze any new or "user created" roads and trails*
- *These are trails not designated for OHV use, or managed by the FS*
- *However, there are opportunities in future to work with Districts on site-specific proposals*

Meetings in Baker City, LaGrande, & Enterprise saw proposed action and maps. Internet site and info available at all sites

Comments indicate diverse views and lack of information about the process. They want the comment period extended, and are concerned about the prohibition on big game retrieval.

Concern about not considering new/user-build OHV trails, restricting use on ML1 roads, limits elder/disabled, special permit users. Closing date extended to August 17.

For more info: <http://www.fs.fed.us/r6/w-w/recreation/ohv/ojv-rule.shtml>

*****ACTION ITEM: (STATE WHAT, WHO, & WHEN)**

- *Steve Ellis will send handout materials to RAC via Tanis & Virginia, including copy of ATV registration data from Idaho.*
- *Decision document should note the exemptions for permit holder use when needed.*
- *Umatilla Heppner RD is on similar timeline to Wallowa-Whitman. Ochoco is scheduling public meetings to accomplish their scoping, so schedule may be about the same.*
- *Steve Ellis will consider the Forest's needs and tell Dave Henderson how the RAC can help in this process. If individual members want to provide comments, they should.*

OR/WA Transportation Strategy -Chris Knauf

The BLM process is different from the Forest Service. Consider the questions.

Resource values

Focus on the intent of experience sought – quality or “benefit-based”

Visual quality

Solitude / quiet

Wildlife

Impacts to adjacent landowners – noise, trespass, vandalism

Unmanaged use

Prime forest land

Native habitat, vegetation

Safety – for all users

Maintained roads & trails, and financial capacity to maintain them

Traditional uses

Working

Seed collection

Distinguish between Recreational OHV & Utility-based OHV (R-OHV, U-OHV)

Utilizing acronyms for definitions, maps, enforcement

Big game retrieval

Target shooting

Rock collecting

Rock crawling

Sightseeing

Inventory

Skid trails

Railroad beds – Rails to Trails

USFS – coordinate with border issues

Ancient trade routes/cultural trails

Designation may dictate degree of inventory needed, but without inventory, some areas may not have benchmark to determine if damage occurs.

Criteria Considerations

Crosswalk between values

Critical access/administration

Frequency of use and costs to maintain to standard

Conflict with permitted or other uses (eg. Livestock)

Connecting routes

Environmental justice – cumulative impacts to public health/safety {not limited to immediate area}

Snow travel

Registration – self-issued permit (to track usage and missing persons)

Feasibility to implement and enforce closures

Weed transport

Permits and contractors requirements include a pre-wash before travel; monitor compliance

Staging areas with a wash station

Pre-wash requirement – immediately wash prior to arrival; phase in at rec sites (eg. Morrow County)

Capture or self-contain wash water in sediment traps

Other recreationists carry seeds – same idea applies

Weed-free feed for horses, other pack animals at main portals to un-infested areas

Pick portals/ trailheads

Identify weed prevention areas

Eradicate weeds at high-use areas (staging, gravel pits, parking and trailheads)

Public Comment Period

Jim Hancock recalled some history of public lands in Sutton Mountain area. The land exchange broadened public access, and the North Fork block has been a real asset to the BLM. Encourage Federal officials to look at opportunities to block up land areas that give the public access to special places. Things Jim would like to be remembered for are: 1) Land exchange program, 2) Working with advisory groups, with JDS at the head of the list. The joint participation of the land management agencies has been a key to the success, because the ownership patterns may not match up with resources. Sending regards from Gay Ernst. Have fun!

OR/WA Transportation Strategy (cont'd) -Chris KnaufBest methods to inform the public

Pictures/Visuals

Kiosks

Video games

Education curriculum packet (Leslie Ridgemon @ Burns District)

Sidebars on recreation and special area maps

ODFW includes messages with their regs

Interviews on local radio talk segments

State of Idaho has Idaho Weed Awareness

Oregon Department of Agriculture has an outreach/education arm

Tie into existing programs, CWMAs

Community weed days, free chemicals

Emphasize the real costs of weed spread

Waterborne transport of aquatic invasives

Criteria – road retention

Need

Type & quality of closure “barriers”

Availability of alternate routes

Weed and fire control

Access “closed” roads for emergency/administrative needs – built-in flexibility without delay
Impacts to land due to excessive number of roads (road density) – consider not retaining for potential further use

Hydrologic data

Capacity to adjust when needed for new species

Access important for ACECs, TES

Criteria for closure required for county support – complies with MOU with Association of Oregon Counties

Consider the non-motorized alternate uses

Tie in with County transportation plans to assure definitions match

Monitoring – RAC/BLM

It’s more appropriate for the agency to develop with specialists, and RAC can comment on the strategy

Elements of the rangeland health standards apply to all uses on the public land; maybe the RAC could ferret out specific criteria

BLM has issued monitoring manuals for upland and other issues – use similar protocols for this

Tiered monitoring, where certain criteria would trigger further inspection & monitoring – refer to question 1. Look for change vs. trend monitoring

Road density is an indicator for monitoring activities

Many of the land management plans refer to road density – that could be start point for monitoring

Watershed councils are already out there and could participate in monitoring partnership

General comments

Is this being coordinated with neighboring Forests? The public needs it to be seamless along a road or trail (no sudden closures along a route, etc)

The BLM needs to catch up with Forest Service, or all OHV recreation will end up on BLM

This will require full-blown plan amendments to get this in place

Rule process – BLM has no deadline for this right now. Needs to be an SLT topic so the DMs can make it a priority

Solicit help from all stakeholders

Law enforcement capacity to enforce

OHV dealers are hearing a concern that OHV users will not have anyplace to go. Need to identify play areas across the landscape – FS, BLM, State

Connectivity of routes

Pick partners that can help access Rural Conservation & Development funding from the Agriculture Department

Get a master map in digital format from National Geographic, so people can get the latest data on a site

Load trail information into GPS packets for downloads and sell them

Better maps (or maps) available at entry portals; must tie in with universal system on the ground

Signage must be really obvious that indicate clearly where it’s OK to go, and where it’s closed – maybe the “green dot” system

Showing private property rights-of-way raises a liability issue

ACTION ITEM: Create a matrix similar to JDR RMP preliminary analysis (at strategy level vs. specific plan) to review at September meeting. Report on SE OR RAC comments.

Subgroup Updates

Noxious Weeds Subgroup

Berta reported that the weed subgroup decided to have a conference call on August 20 at 7:00 p.m. Everyone review Umatilla Draft Veg EIS and be ready to discuss. After the conference call, subgroup will draft a letter for the RAC to vote on. Berta will send a draft to the full RAC by August 31, and final recommendations will be submitted to Kevin at the September meeting.

- *Weed subgroup will review the Umatilla EIS prior to the conference call August 20 at 7:00 pm*
- *Berta will draft a RAC comment letter and send to all RAC members by August 31, so it can be finalized to give to Kevin Martin at the September RAC meeting*
- *Virginia will schedule the conference call & send out reminder.*

John Day Basin RMP Subgroup

John Day subgroup wants to come to Prineville on the afternoon of July 10. Upon review of an updated matrix provided by Tina (by July 2), red flag issues should be sent to Berta by July 6. Berta will provide the subgroup response to Tina on the morning of July 9. Group have an opportunity to ask questions, share insights with the planning team when they get to Prineville. Tina will confirm that the 10th will work with the planning team.

******ACTION ITEMS: (STATE WHAT, WHO, & WHEN)***

- *Tina will send an expanded version of the John Day matrix to RAC members by July 2*
- *Tina will confirm that planning team members will be available July 10*
- *Subgroup will review John Day materials and send comments to Berta by July 6.*

Berta will draft a letter with RAC recommendations and get a copy to Tina on the morning of July 9

Blue Mountain Forest Subgroup

Blue Mountain Forest progress stalled because of the injunction on forest planning related to Categorical Exclusion issues; 2005 regs are being re-done at Headquarters. Forest is looking at range suitability right now, and things needed if the W-W has to do an EIS. Plan will be revised when a determination is made about what planning rule to use. Looks like January 2008 for moving forward. RAC input may be helpful in developing alternatives. RAC members may want to point out any red-flag issues found in the initial document, or defer the closer look until the September meeting.

ACTION ITEM: Subgroup members will look over the Draft Blue Mountain Forest Plan Revision (Steve will confirm that January 22 is the most recent draft). If not, a newer version needs to be mailed out to the subgroup. Get any red-flag items to Terri Drever-Gee by August 27. She will forward this input to Dave Schmitt by August 31.

- *Virginia will include Dave on the agenda for the September RAC meeting. Forest needs to identify key issues they want the RAC to review in the draft (ie timber harvest vs timber products. Forest consider preparing a list of questions, as with the Travel Mgmt Strategy effort, and have a work session with the RAC at the September meeting.*

Roundtable

Kevin Martin – May tag onto the W-W segment in September regarding the Heppner travel management plan. Looking at all recreation facilities to inventory, assess conditions, compare to uses, maintenance backlog, so they can plan what they'll be doing with them. Rec RAC may get some requests for new fees if it is warranted. Mary Gibson retired, and Mike Rossbeck is coming from the Sweet Home District of the Willamette NF; report date is July 22, and he's excited. His wife is a fisheries biologist. Biomass interest in this area is for cellulose / ethanol products. Biodiesel is the focus at Boardman. Several feasibility studies underway. Recent meeting had about 50 people attending to discuss varied renewable energy options. Varied interests were represented. Terri recommended RC&D and Secure Rural Schools as potential funding sources.

Steve Ellis – Blue Mountain land exchange may be moving forward. Want to be on the September meeting for travel management to update or request help. Working on a biomass project for Wallowa County.

Phil Shephard – Hired Heather *for staff in Burns. Working on sage grouse habitat and other issues. Office is in the ARS office. TNC is working to identify specific high value areas which do NOT have weeds to keep them safe.

Mike Hayward – Nothing to report

Terri Drever-Gee – Visited Washington DC to lobby for Secure Rural Schools extension. Delegation is working on added extension. Appreciated the field trip. Frustrated with whoever is forcing injunctions; much more can be accomplished by working together in the fashion of the RAC.

Frank Bird – Rec RAC has met twice. They have been pretty unanimous in approving the requests, which have been minimal amounts and the need is clearly demonstrated. Agencies have done a great job in preparing materials and bringing correct staff to present the briefings. Approved Gifford Pinchot changes. Meet next in October. Burns new hospital will operate on pellets, and that may be an avenue to use woody debris from thinning projects.

Adrienne Borgias – Facilitated questions on OHV were very helpful

Bob Parker – Field trip and OHV were very useful in understanding the issues.

Debbie Norton – Look forward to working with this group. The insert to the local papers was well done and well received. Working with the Warm Springs Tribe and the local federal agencies. Got \$5 million to help develop the biomass energy generation plant on the reservation. There is another plant proposed for LaPine. Schools in the area are considering shifting to biomass power. Stewardship Contracting is the likely avenue for supplying the Warm Springs plant. Upper Deschutes site-specific issue for Cline Buttes OHV activity, with conflicting views on acceptable impacts. Should have a draft EA by the end of the year.

Tina Welch - John Day River Plan directed BLM to manage the wild and scenic portion of the river with a group of cooperators. Ready to sign an agreement that it will be managed cooperatively. The plan identified the outstanding values, and BLM has to identify the limits on use so the values would not be jeopardized. Court ordered BLM to finish the plan, and develop the "limits of acceptable change" later. BLM has now identified 17 measurable characteristics that indicate change impacts. One element is the number of launches compared to the number of campsites. To manage this, BLM is proposing that permits be required, and this would require implementing a fee system

- **ACTION ITEM:** RAC members who want a copy of the fee proposal for the John Day river should send an e-mail to Tina Welch.

Shirley Muse – Spending the past year working locally, so that's been her big focus. One big success was neighborhood walkabouts to get community involved; folks could voice what they did like and what they didn't like in their city.

Art Waugh – Attending OHV open houses in the area. Oregon Governor signed the renewable energy law requiring 25% renewable. May prompt many new applications for wind energy.

Mike Lawrence – Weed EIS got 7 substantial comments. They expect to issue the ROD in September. They've already done their travel management plan.

Dave Riley – Nothing to report

Bill Lang – Nothing to report, except that a Vermont political scientist has finished a book-length manuscript on the history of RACs and their role. Bill may review the galley proof. If he reviews it, he'll report back at the September meeting.

David Moryc – Yesterday's field trip was valuable, especially the last stop with the resort owner. It showed the impact that federal decisions have on local people.

Dave Henderson – Debbie Lyons is moving to DC on July 26. BLM's new grazing regs have been enjoined, so we are waiting to see what rules we fall back to. Energy Corridor ROW is targeted to be released at the end of July 2007, with public meetings scheduled in the fall. Jim Caswell is the new nominated BLM Director. First Director in recent history to be a career land manager.

Berta Youtie – Nothing to report

Virginia Gibbons – Applaud the group for full attendance on the field trip. Lots of activity right now, and appreciate everyone's energy and participation.

Upcoming meeting dates and field trip considerations –September 11-12 in Baker City; planning a field trip on the first day to view sage grouse habitat. National Guard Armory has affordable meeting space, and Geyser Grand may have space available, also Sunridge. Terry Drever-Gee has offered her place for a BBQ after the field trip-she is located 10 minutes from town.

December 4 meeting will be in Pendleton.

*****ACTION ITEM: (STATE WHAT, WHO, & WHEN)**

- *Dave to work with local units to plan the field trip in September.*

SEPTEMBER MEETING AGENDA ITEMS:

Travel Management/Chris Knauf-30 minutes-matrix (similar to JDRMP prelim alt's document), review SE OR RAC comments.

JD RMP Update/Team lead-1 hour-review draft

Blue Mountain Forest Plan Revision/Dave Schmitt-2 hour work session-Identify key issues for RAC to comment on from Draft.

Umatilla NF Veg EIS-RAC response letter/Decision

Salmon Recovery Update-Identify feedback method; RAC must comment through FS or BLM & cannot comment directly to NOAA.

ADJOURNED BUSINESS MEETING at 3:52 pm